WILSHIRE'S

Vol. XVI No. VIII LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1912 Price 2 cents

A Reply to "Syndicalism: What It Is"

By Fred. Knee, and A Rejoinder by Wilshire

The following is a reply to my article on "Syndicalism: What It Is," which appeared in the August "Wilshire's," and which originally was published in the "British Socialist," the monthly magazine of the British Socialist Party, and of which Mr. Knee was, at the time, acting editor. Both Mr. Knee's reply and my rejoinder also appeared in the "British Socialist." —G. W.

WE owe a great deal to our present Liberal Government. The latest item of our debt is the adding to the language of a new word—Syndicalism. Of all Britain's forty odd millions, it is safe to say that six months ago outside of perhaps 400 of the cognoscenti of the industrial unionist persuasion the rest of the British people knew not whether Syndicalism was some new species of carrot or the name of a new Christian sect—and they cared less. Now every season ticket holder on our suburban railways chews it over; every ignorant fool in Parliament wants to display his erudition on it; and every palate tickler in the trustified daily press spins miles and miles of wearisome drivel about it. This change we owe to the Liberal Government. They prosecuted the "Syndicalist" editor, publisher and printers—and forthwith everybody talked of Syndicalism; and our old friend Gaylord Wilshire, who a while back might have been accused of being a mere State collectivist —so insistent was he on the Nation owning the Trusts— and who the day before had been a warm admirer of the Labor Party and Mr. Lloyd George's insurance scheme, was, like Saul of Tarsus, suddenly blinded by a flood of new light, and began to preach the new faith in many tongues.

Boiled down to its essentials, Wilshire's position, as set forth in the last number of "The British Socialist," is that of the three weapons which the worker may use for the purpose of achieving his emancipation he must choose only one—the strike; and that instead of capturing the State and moulding it to his desire, the worker shall ignore the State altogether and seek to supersede it by a collection of workers, each group to possess its own industry. That is Syndicalism.

As a Socialist and trade unionist I am ready to employ any and all means to bring about the overthrow of capitalism. If the bullet be useful and necessary for the purpose of defending the workers against the capitalist State's soldiers, then I see no reason why it should be ruled out of our armoury. If a strike big or little appears likely to be of service in forcing concessions from the capitalists or from the State, or in resisting the economic or political encroachments of either, then as a trade unionist I should vote for a strike, and as a Socialist I should actively assist the strikers. Again, if by using the vote I can make any sort of progress towards the driving out of the present possessors of the means of life, or even towards securing healthier conditions in the district where I may happen to reside, then I will use the vote.

In regard to method, then, the issue between us ought to be pretty clear. We Socialists are for using all the weapons: the Syndicalists will use only one—the strike.

But even Wilshire, like the ancient Anarchists, wobbles; for I find that while in the article with which I am dealing he says nothing about it, yet in his article in the "Syndicalist" he makes a reservation in favour of using the vote in local administration. Working men, it seems, can usefully vote for a town councillor, or for a member of a board of guardians, and may do themselves good thereby, but they cannot function by way of the Parliamentary vote. Well, the distinction and difference may be very clear to an "intellectual," but they are rather too fine for the perception of the working man, who, when he becomes Socialist or even only "Labor" in any sort of independent sense, exercises his vote both for Parliament and local bodies. It will be found that where Socialists are strong municipally they are also strong in the Parliamentary sense, e.g., West Ham, Bradford, Merthyr, and Bow and Bromley. Sometimes the use of the municipal vote has preceded the use of the other; in some cases it has been the other way about. I mention this point to show that even friend Wilshire is not quite sound; in fact, he does not seem to mind if the worker continues to be illogical and to vote for his master against whom he may have struck. It would appear that our Syndicalist friends are so opposed to Socialism that they do not trouble if till the crack of doom the worker votes Liberal or Tory provided he does not vote Socialist. These contradictions are inevitable in so impossible a position as that of trying to get ahead without taking any heed of the State at all. Our friends remind me of some of the ignorant Saxons who laughed when William the Norman began dotting his Norman castles about the country: they thought, poor foolish souls, that if they only ignored the castles they could regain possession of their own land. Like those castles the State is here, and will not be ignored.

I am not a "Parliamentary Socialist," in the sense implied by Wilshire, nor is there, to my knowledge, in the British Socialist Party a single member who relies solely on the exercise of the vote for the worker's own emancipation. During the score and more of years that I have been connected with the Socialist movement I and the others have urged the workers to organise and federate and amalgamate in their several industries, and also to use the vote or the strike as occasion afforded and required. We thought the two together would work the necessary miracle, and if force of a physical or gunpowdery description were required, we added the suggestion that we should have a Citizen Army. I do not propose to discuss the latter in this article; but will confine myself to the question of political *and* industrial action, for I refuse to place them in antagonism. It is not an accident that in Germany and the Scandinavian countries, where the workers are stronger politically than they are anywhere else, they are also the most strongly organised industrially.

I do not for a moment admit that the facts are with the Syndicalists when they say that "the working man" is "willing to stake his very life upon a strike that will give him little or nothing, even if won; whereas, he will not take the trouble to walk ten feet to a ballot-box, where a

victory might give him most substantial benefits." For one thing, the working man will not stake his very life on a strike; and the quicker he is to strike the more eagerly does he return to work. In fact, the average working man will not even organise in a union; and even some of those working men who now bleat about industrial union and industrial action belong to no industrial organisation at all. But the average working man will and does walk hundreds of yards, sometimes miles, to a ballot-box. Mostly he votes for his masters, generally because he has no one else for whom to vote; but even then he uses such discrimination as is in him, and hopes that he has either at the very worst voted for the lesser of two evils, or at the very best for a party or cause that will help him to be rid of some of his shackles. In this country he still thinks for the most part that the landlord and not the capitalist is the enemy, and so votes Liberal. If, however, he imagines his bad lot to be due to foreign competition, he will back Tariff Reform and vote Tory. In either case he hopes he is doing himself a "bit of good." I speak of the non-Socialist working man of average intelligence. When he sees the "red light," he will even then perhaps vote Liberal, because Lloyd George's talk and Chiozza Money's figures make the Liberal chameleon look a bit Socialist. I have also had the pleasure of seeing the awakened worker go and vote in organised and determined fashion for very substantial benefits for himself—and sometimes get them, too. At any rate, it is all nonsense to say the worker does not vote: he does. The trouble is that, as for the most part the workers do not organise industrially in their own behoof, so generally they have not yet learnt to vote for a party of their own. It is all nonsense to suppose that the worker is worldly-wise in the workshop, but must always be an absolute idiot in the outside world, or be like a fish out of water. There is no "instinct against politics," such as Wilshire alleges, on the part of the worker, and which he hails as "sounder" than the "intelligence of the intellectual." In this country there are next to no organised workers—leaders or rank and file—who have this instinct against "politics." It is curious that, of our Socialist weeklies, "Justice"—run by men who are trade unionists as well as Socialists—and the "Labour Leader"—run by Socialists and trade unionists, advocate Socialism to be obtained by political plus industrial action, while the advocacy of Syndicalism is left to the "New Age," par excellence the organ of the "intellectuals" and of the weirdest of art.

If the worker in politics were like a "fish out of water," can Wilshire or anyone else explain how it is that when this queer fish by some stroke of luck or supergrab ceases to be a worker and becomes a capitalist of a smaller or bigger order, that he takes to the political air like a lark? He must certainly in that case change that "human nature" of his very quickly. He uses his political power as well as though he never had been a worker with an anti-political instinct. Is it an accident that the capitalist section closest to the working class has in our day produced the most cunning statesman of the whole crowd—Lloyd George? Can Wilshire explain how it is that the peasant population of Ireland—true, not an industrial but a landless proletariat—have so used their political weapon, even in an alien Parliament, as to establish themselves as a propertied class? And are there not abundant cases where, since the uprising of the Socialist movement and under its inspiration, the workers in Great Britain have forced their way into Council chambers, have sat in the seats of the mighty by virtue of their fellow-workers' votes, and have administered within and sometimes beyond the limits of existing laws?

And the more revolutionary their spirit, the more class-conscious their attitude, the more they have achieved. They might have done the same in the House of Commons. The capitalist class experienced two spasms of fear in the last seven years: one in 1906 at the portent of a nominally independent Labor Party in the House of Commons; the other at the transport workers' and railway workers' strikes of 1911. The perturbation passed away in the one case because the capitalist class discovered that there was nothing revolutionary about the Labor Party. The other is passing away because the capitalist class discovered that there is little that is revolutionary about the transport workers' unions or the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and the capitalist classes can very well go for their usual holidays knowing full well that their State—"moribund" I hear it called—has got the thing well in hand, or at the worst is playing it like a salmon at the end of a strong line.

Wilshire and others who hold an exaggerated notion of the strike forget what the strike has mostly been—a weapon of defence rather than of offence: an act of desperation lest worse befall. Nearly all are agreed that the big strikes of the last two years have been as a spark of discontent fanned into flame by the rapidly worsening conditions of the workers due to the increase in food prices. Like the Peasants' revolt of the Middle Ages, the strike is not a march into the enemy's territory, but a frenzied determination to defend our own frontier or to retake something we have lost. Whether the strike can ever be converted into a weapon of offence is a matter for consideration; but the notion that we can ever possess ourselves of our inheritance by means of the strike alone is to me the most hopeless madness that ever was conceived. The people who know what strikes are, from the inside, are chary of advocating them; it is the middle-class "intellectual" who usually imagines these vain things, though I have known even some trade union officials, who could not get their own trade to strike at all, to talk very eloquently in the same glowing, poetic way about mass action and all the rest of the jargon that saves people from thinking.

I have three objections to Syndicalism: (1) it is impossible of achievement; (2) it would not be worth having, and (3) it is not revolutionary but reactionary.

You cannot get very far by mere "industrial action." So long as the capitalist State remains, with its army, navy and police, and its hand on the machine of administration, so long will it be possible for that capitalist State, when thoroughly awake to any danger, to throttle any strike, however big, and to render it abortive. That the Government did not take order with strike leaders and the rank and file last year was not because of any fear of economic or industrial consequences, but purely for political reasons. One was the fear of Germany, the other was the fear that they might suffer electorally. The railway strike could easily have been made a laughable fizzle. As it was, the khaki gentlemen with their bayonets at the London termini were only a faint suggestion of the power of the capitalist State—"moribund"—ha! ha! And even then the Government did not proceed, as they might have done, to use the Royal Engineers to work the trains. They even assisted the railwaymen's joint executives to arrange the strike, placed the resources of the State at their disposal for that purpose. They need not have done so.

They had a very complete general strike in Sweden last year. It failed. Why? Simply because the governing classes of Sweden, while willing, for the moment, to forego the use of non-necessaries, actually did the vitally necessary work themselves. With our complex society, while the working class is necessary for the production of profit, only a very small part of that working class is necessary for the production of the absolute necessaries of life. So that the governing classes, having first of all reserves upon which to fall back, can, at a pinch, with the assistance of the ever-present blackleg residuum, do the absolutely necessary work for themselves, and the worker can be starved out. After all, the mass vote is the only weapon with which our numbers can at present be made to tell. Moroever, what may be gained by the strike may be as easily lost—filched away; and agreements ignored. This year's transport workers' strike is in order to get a proper

interpretation of last year's agreement! A further danger now looms on the horizon—the holding of the workers' funds as hostage for *their* performance of contracts.

If I had no hope in the political sphere, I should be inclined to follow William Morris's advice at one of Lansbury's Walworth election meetings: "If you will not use your votes, then you had better make peace with your masters."

I know it may be said that the strike is not the only method of "direct action." There is "ca' canny." Well, that is not a patent of Syndicalism. I have advised it myself on some exceptional occasions to meet employers' exceptional exactions, but even in a trade union shop it was found to be most difficult to carry out. It is one of those things that the mass may make up their minds to do, but which have to be carried out by the individual, who for his pains may find his services dispensed with for quite other reasons; or the whole of the factory may be put on short time, an excellent way of speeding men up. Our friends are too prone to think the capitalists are fools; so they are in many respects, but they are quite equal in cunning to any body of workmen, and they find it less difficult to act with one mind. The starving out of an unproductive industry would be the answer to any proposal by the worker to sweat out the employer.

I don't want to become possessed of my industry. I take the old-fashioned view that "work"—certainly as we know it—is the primal curse. I don't want to be possessed in any shape or form of the printing industry; I would rather be out of it. Suppose we try to become possessed of it. What happens? How soon do we sweat or rush the capitalist master printer out of it? And what meanwhile happens to the industry? If other industries were following suit there would be a great diminution in the demand for our labor. That would take place very early in the proceedings, and the only way in which that and other difficulties could be met would be to form a sort of co-partnery with the employer. The chimney-sweep, the road sweeper, the sewer man, a thousand and one other lines of industry suggest at once the futility and absurdity of seeking for salvation via purely "industrial action."

In fact, of prospect of getting rid of capitalists and landlords by means of this method there is none. Syndicalism is a cul de sac, a stereotyping of existing conditions, producing a state of "arrested development," and it also offers a fearful temptation to make corrupt arrangements with the employers as against the community: a reversion to the ancient guilds, but with "elder brethren" who will fatten and "younger brethren" who will work. Those outside the guilds will remain as a proletarian class, even more hopeless than now.

All the twaddle about Syndicalism having no respect for property must mean, if it means anything at all, mere sabotage and destruction. I think it is foolish to destroy what may easily be our own.

At any rate, Syndicalism proposes to perpetuate for many generations private property in land and capital, and for that reason I reject it.

Just a word in conclusion as to the difficulties of political action. Here in this country they are very much overrated, and I do not credit any one of the capitalist parties with being fools enough to restrict the suffrage. If they did, then the strike, as a weapon of desperation, would remain. The capitalist class when faced by a majority of Socialists in the House of Commons would also be faced by a Socialist majority in the country; and either a Socialist Administration would be placed in charge of the Army, Navy, Post Office, and other national services, or that Socialist majority would render government by any other section impossible. Wilshire seems not to be aware that in the struggle between landlords and capitalists the former have allowed the latter to vote away some of their privileges; under stress of the State's necessities some of the property rights of both have been diminished. For one-seventh of a dead man's estate to go to the State instead of to his heirs is a limitation of property rights. They would fight as best they might, but they would have to go down before the majority armed with powers of law as well as with bayonets and bullets. The notion that a Socialist majority would cool its heels in the corridor is funny even for an "intellectual." It is certain that it would not occur to a worker. Even Socialist minorities don't do that. A Socialist majority would materially alter Parliament and the State, would alter them fundamentally, but the process would be according to the community's requirements. After all, even Wilshire suggests some sort of Parliament, to represent interests instead of districts. No wonder he has a hankering for the Labor Party, which is largely made up in that way, and which, partly on that account, is so non-revolutionary.

We Socialists are out to secure the supremacy of the working class, to place that class as a whole in possession of the means of life, and so to obliterate all class distinctions. As we find that one by one the other classes have forced their way out of servitude to economic power by using the political weapon, we submit that this political weapon may be useful for the only subject class now left. We are the more convinced of this because it is by reason of the possession of their political power that landlords and capitalists are able to retain possession and control of the means of life, and of the working class. We mean that the working class, by vote and strike and even by brute force if necessary, shall thrust them out. It is of no use discussing the bullets we have not, but we do say, "Use the vote as you can, and strike as you must." We decline to drop either weapon. Those who profess to drop politics have themselves to resort to them. It was by appeal to the political power that Mann's sentence was reduced and Bowman was released. The old trade unions, who openly flouted political action, had to go to Parliament to safeguard their very existence and property; and they have found it useful for securing in factory and in mine ameliorations of their industrial conditions which it is doubtful if they could ever have achieved by "direct action"—certainly not without an infinity of suffering. The old anti-political trade unions have begun to learn the lesson of political action; their representatives in the House have blundered and fumbled, and yet they have managed to get things. The miners are the only big section of workers to secure a big reduction of hours in the last 20 years—they won it by political action. The engineers tried the other way and failed. They also now look to political action. This change of mind is still very young; and before the method has even had a fair trial some of our volatile friends say, "No, not that way, let us try direct action," which the trade unionists had been trying all the while before. They had had sixty years of direct action, and found themselves—some a very little better off, most of them worse off. Let us have sixty years of political action conducted even in the same spirit, and the results, as shown by the last six years, would be greater. But given a revolutionary policy and method, not sixty, but ten, years would be sufficient for all practical purposes. Fancy a body of avowed revolutionaries being unable to function in a National Assembly where revolutions, economic and political, have been recorded in the past!

So, then, let the workers unite, not divide and "syndicalise."

Let us oust the landlord and capitalist class, and not leave them in possession indefinitely. Let us use their own chief weapon against them, make the State our State, and so transform it into our Commune—each for all, all for each—without any dangerous sectionalising attached, even by name, to factory hell or colliery dust-heap of the hideous past.

Note.—My rejoinder will be found on page 5.—G.W.

Established 1900

WILSHIRE'S MAGAZINE

Published Monthly by
Wilshire Publishing Company
GAYLORD WILSHIRE,
Editor.

Subscription, Post Paid to any address in the World, 25 cents or One Shilling per year.

38, CLERKENWELL GREEN, E.C.
London

Vol. XVI. September, 1912. No. 8

Political Toll: Its End in Sight

Gaylord Wilshire thinks that until the Labor Party has a majority it is practically powerless; meanwhile, he says, "carping at them is more or less unreasonable." The Irish Party have never had a majority, nor even a hundred members, yet it has taken toll of both parties.

Wilshire says, "Politically the advanced Liberals and the present Labor Party are blood relations," and it is suicidal for the Labor Party to run three-cornered fights. Scratch a Syndicalist, you find an Anarchist; scratch again, you'll find a Liberal.

Still the Labor Party fares badly at three-cornered fights—Holmfirth poorly, Crewe worse, Hanley worst of the lot.

The foregoing comments are from "Justice," the organ of the British Socialist Party. As to the possibility of the Labor Party taking toll, that is readily admitted as long as it doesn't ask too much toll and holds the balance of power between the Liberals and Tories. In fact, it had a slice of toll the other day, when the Liberal Party appointed Ramsay MacDonald on the Indian Commission. But the point I make is that the toll it can get is never much of anything, and when it does get it the payment in exchange is always too heavy; and finally, the moment it elects enough Members of Parliament to constitute a permanent balance of power, then the Tories and Liberals will unite and pay no more toll at all.

As to my opinion that the Labor Party and the Liberal Party are blood relations constituting me either an Anarchist or a Liberal, I would remark that "vituperation is not argument" applies particularly. I said it would be suicidal for the Labor Party to fight the Liberals, and "Justice" admits this by noting that the Labor Party fared badly in the recent three-cornered fights.

It also might be remarked that no journal has been stouter in its contention that the Labor Party exists by grace of the Liberal Party than "Justice" itself, and yet when "Wilshire's" merely re-echoes the same thing instead of getting a cheer I get a brick.

The whole amount of the matter is that the Labor Party and the British Socialist Party are merely nominal foes, and when attacked by a common enemy they instinctively unite for mutual defence. The cry of "Justice" has long been for Socialist Unity. Syndicalism will bring about Socialist Unity more than any other single force. Never before has there been such unanimity shown between the Laborites and the Socialists as seen in their joint attitude to Syndicalism.

The Lost Transport Strike

That the London Transport strike should have been lost this year while it was won last year has occasioned some surprise among those not wholly familiar with the facts.

In order to get a first-hand authority on the matter, I asked my old friend Ben Tillett to give me a few items explaining the matter from his point of view. He writes me, under date of August 9, as follows:—

While this year's fight was for the same men, yet the same men were not asking for similar conditions of advances, but were merely fighting for a principle securing their wages as a body of workmen under an agreement which they had won last year. First, the carmen this year did not respond to the call. In last year's fight the employers could not obtain the carmen to carry food supplies.

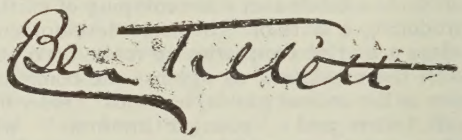
This year the meat supply of London was hardly affected. Thus one great arm of our forces was cut off. Last year we were able to stop the refrigerating works, and this gave the whole country a great shock; this year none of these men appeared to be interested, but were perfectly agreeable to work along on the better conditions they had obtained through the strike of last year. No solidarity.

This year the fight was too early in the year, being two months earlier than last year, and not so favourable for the strike. I was anxious to postpone action for that reason. Last year the employers were not organised locally or nationally; this year they were prepared. This was pointed out to our organisations, but the "bulls" would rush it, and make a fight of it anyway. Last year the whole of the Transport Workers were alive with resentment against the employers, and fighting in all the ports, and they were without organisations or agreements. This year they had both, and would not risk the same after fighting so hard for them. Last year the union officials risked nothing; but this year they had something to lose, and so cried off when the National stoppage was declared. You see there are distinctions, and they tell (a) against agreements, and (b) against responsible organisation. I think that about hits the position off.

But we shall be making a fight of it again. I feel pretty sad about things, but still it is all in the day's work, and we shall have to make the best of it, and now get back to the renewing and the rebuilding. It is good to be alive, though, and to be making the fight, and to know that the men are such brave, good souls. I am sure that I shall never forget the heroic struggle and the great bravery of it all.

The men and the women and their children all showed heroic qualities, even in the very depths; the big human qualities. I never knew such unselfishness.

I shall be glad to see you soon, and have a long talk over the things that really matter. Good luck and the best of good wishes.—Yours sincerely,



Tom Mann was in prison when the strike began, and was not released until it was nearly over. It is quite possible that had he been at liberty he might with his power over the Transport Workers have, with the aid of Tillett, brought about that solidarity by which alone all are agreed the strike could have been won.

However, the lesson of the lost strike will not be lost. Already plans are being laid which should bring about an amalgamation of the transport and railway workers in Great Britain. When this is done the next strike will be a momentous one, and if it be won will carry with its victory vast consequences.

EIGHT-PAGE PAMPHLET ON

SYNDICALISM

BY

GAYLORD WILSHIRE

Two Cents each or 16 Cents per dozen, post paid. Remit in Stamps or Postal Order, Wilshire's Magazine, 38, Clerkenwell Green, London

Gaylord Wilshire's Rejoinder to Knee

Syndicalists and Socialists are both in accord in demanding the abolition of the present system of private ownership of the means of production and the substitution of the community ownership. Their vision of the future Industrial Democracy may differ somewhat in details, but, inasmuch as both no doubt would be quite willing to take a chance if the present competitive wage-system were abolished, the future system will settle itself satisfactorily enough without needing any quarrel to-day about arranging things for the millennium.

The main point we have to consider is, "how to get there," and the "there" may be defined as being either Socialism or Syndicalism as far as I am concerned. The "how" is the important thing, inasmuch as the Syndicalist declares the "how"—the vote—of the Socialist as impractical as the Socialist declares the "how"—the strike—of the Syndicalist to be.

Now let us consider what the "vote" is, anyway. Is it not simply a method of counting noses and determining whether or no one side is so strong that the minority had better at once give in rather than be slaughtered by a superior force?

In cases of no apparent vital import a man will usually submit to the will of the majority rather than suffer any great physical discomfort or danger. As the import of the question increases, the chances of peaceful submission decrease, and particularly is this the case if the minority think the majority have not the physical strength to coerce. Witness Ulster.

Suffragettes admittedly have no majority of the nation on their side, yet, such is their devotion to their cause, it is probable that the Government will succumb to their attack, to sabotage, simply because they will consider the loss they may incur through giving women the vote is less than the annoyance they will surely experience if they do not.

The experience in other countries has shown very conclusively that giving women the vote, or the men either for that matter, makes practically no difference to the propertied classes. It is merely tradition in England and not any real fear of danger that prevents woman suffrage here.

Parliament will under pressure give about anything the public may demand except any real concession of property rights; rather than do this it will end the Parliamentary system itself.

Knee instances what the peasants of Ireland have done. I would point out that they have really made no dent in property, inasmuch as the landowners have been reimbursed; and anyway if they had not been it would simply mean that certain Irish landlords had been expropriated for the benefit of the remainder of the British capitalist class. I take it that as long as the competitive wage system exists the workers will be automatically deprived of any surplus-value they may create, and that any changes in property rights is merely a question of shifting profits and rents from one section of the capitalist class to another section. The capitalist class as a class is not affected. Moreover, it might be pointed out that the Irish got what they did get, not by any revolutionary political action, but partly by sabotage and partly by political trading, by pitting one section of the Parliamentary capitalist party against the other section. If the demands of the Irish had been sufficiently revolutionary we would never have seen them supported by big capitalists of the Liberal Party merely in order to keep Asquith and Lloyd George in office. Certainly Knee does not imagine that if the British Socialist Party, or even the Labor Party, had the same balance of power now held by the Irish Party that the Liberal wing of the Liberal-Tory capitalist Party would give them Socialism in order to retain office. Let the Labor Party get stronger, and Liberals and Tories will at once combine.

Says Knee, for "one-seventh of a man's estate to go to the State is a limitation of property rights." This would seem that Knee rather put himself, too, among the Lloyd George admirers, as he charges me with being, although without that proof he is now furnishing against himself.

Yes, of course, a death duty, and, in fact, any tax, is a "limitation of property rights," but I cannot see that any new principle is involved in a death duty which should fill Knee with this sudden glow of affection for the Liberal Party. As he admits, it is merely a question of the "State's necessities," and as the money must be raised anyway somehow, and as the capitalists have taken care that the workers have nothing and can't pay anything, it is obvious that the burden of any new taxation must fall on the rich.

That the capitalist should have decided to put what is possibly an unfair burden upon those of their number who are dead and gone where they can neither kick nor vote is more a tribute to their caution than to their sympathy with the proletariat.

What I am driving at in all this is to show that the capitalists will allow Parliament to do almost anything except make a real attack on property. A stronger section of them may allow attacks on their weaker brethren, just as a wolf pack will rend a wounded member, but that is their limit.

Knee would have us believe that if the workers should decide by a majority vote that the capitalist must give up all his property rights, that he would cheerfully and peacefully acquiesce in the Socialist programme.

I first of all deny the probability of the workers ever organising well enough politically to elect a majority of revolutionists to Parliament.

Moreover, I declare that even if they did elect a majority that it would be ineffective to compel the capitalist to hand over his property unless they had the power of industrial organisation back of them to compel surrender.

It is upon this point that I seem to find Knee dodging, and it is the crux of our argument. There is no use of his diverting the issue into a discussion of the differences in the vision we may have as to the future State. And it is even less to the point for him to talk about Wilshire hankering after the Insurance Bill and the Labor Party, etc.—I might hanker after gooseberry tart and yet be logical—nor does the fact that Knee proclaims himself a trade unionist make his side of the argument any stronger. He might as well talk about the lovely colour of his hair, or the excellent state of his digestion. This present argument has nothing to do with the personalities immediately involved in it.

I ask Knee directly, what does he proposes to do if, when he gets his miraculous Parliamentary majority, the capitalists refuse to give up?

But he has already answered the question, and answered exactly as a Syndicalist would answer it. Not only once but twice in his reply does he rely upon the strike, upon industrial solidarity, to back up his majority vote. He says, "the working class by vote and strike shall thrust the capitalist out." Of course, when he brackets vote with strike he means merely that preparatory to the "thrusting out" process the capitalist shall first be voted out. He says if the franchise were restricted that there would remain to the workers "the strike as a weapon of desperation." He quite gives up any recourse to any force other than the strike, for, he says, "it is no use discussing the bullets we have not . . . . but vote as you can and strike as you must."

Now, it seems to me that in all this Knee completely gives away his position. He certainly must agree with me that there is a chance that the capitalists may not abdicate merely out of politeness when they hear that the election has gone against them.

If this does happen he admits that the only weapon left to the workers is the strike.

Our difference is merely, then, in forecasting what the capitalists may do. I, myself, am so sure that they will never surrender merely because they may have lost such an unimportant outpost as Parliament, that I say that the workers ought to get busy at once and form the only organisation powerful enough to carry them through to victory—namely, *industrial* organisation.

Knee says that the thing to do is to first get your political majority, and then, if you are refused the fruits of your victory at the polls, form your industrial organisation. I contend that to wait is a useless waste of time.

First, because we will never get a political majority, and if we should, it is absolutely a foregone conclusion that the capitalists would never give up. Meanwhile, by pursuing the Parliamentary delusion we are both enervating our rank and file and exposing our leaders to the corruption of Parliamentary life.

But, says Knee, "the other classes forced their way out of servitude to economic power by using the political weapon"; therefore, he is convinced that politics may be useful to the worker because, by "possession of political power the capitalists retain possession of the means of life."

This reminds me of the old story of the man remarking that big rivers always ran near big cities. The "other classes" first got possession of economic power, the landlords the land, the capitalists the capital, and then the economic power commanded political power.

Political power is the reflex of economic power, and not vice versa, as Knee seems to think. Let the workers get economic power, let them unite industrially and gain possession of the machinery of production, and I will guarantee they will not be wanting in political power, whether they have elected one member to Parliament or six hundred.

Parliament is the tool of those possessing wealth, of those who have economic power. Let the workers get economic power, and they will need no votes to mould Parliament to their will.

Knee says he is in favor of using all the weapons. Would he be in favor of using a bow and arrow against a Dreadnought? The vote as a weapon for revolution is like the bow and arrow, out of date. And yet I admit that in local elections, when there is no thought of revolution, that a Socialist majority on a town council may be of considerable value to the workers.

But in Parliamentary elections the danger is that the workers will be misled by the leaders making them think that the election of their man means a step to revolution. At best, voting is merely indicative of the worker's pious opinion. On the other hand, I also admit that it is obvious that pro rata with the increase of industrial solidarity there will naturally come about an increase in the revolutionary vote. The workers are sure to vote for someone, and, as Knee has pointed out, they usually vote for their masters.

And they always will vote for their masters as long as they are not inspired with the spirit of revolutionary unionism. The most natural evolution of a Tory or Liberal working man is first into Syndicalism and from that into a revolutionary voter. He will not, however, vote with any expectation of getting the revolution by political action, but merely as a method of expressing his desires upon the subject. Just as it is easier to get a man to drop his old economic views for Socialist views than it is to get him to drop his religion for Agnosticism, so it is easier to get him to join an industrial union than it is to get him to drop his old-time political affiliations. Liberalism to the Liberal is like Romanism to the Roman Catholic. Syndicalism proceeds along the line of least resistance—the industrial line—with the workers, and therefore it is the more likely to find a readier acceptance than Socialism.

Knee denies that a workman will "stake his very life on a strike." It seems to me that the proof of my assertion is grimly afforded in the present dockers' strike. I quote the following from "Reynolds's Weekly" for the week ended June 30:—

FACING DEATH.

BABY TAKEN TO CHRISTENING IN BROWN PAPER SHEETS.

Remarkable revelations of the plight of strike-ridden families in the East End were made by Dean Ring, the Rector of St. Mary and St. Michael, Commercial Road, in the course of an interview last night.

"The tragedy of the whole thing is appalling," he said. "Homes are stripped bare, and people have even sold the clothes off their backs in order to relieve terrible sufferings of hunger which they are undergoing. The need now is even greater than last week, for then my poor people had their few sticks of furniture to pawn. But these have now been parted with, and unless the public at once comes to our aid lives will be sacrificed.

"It is no exaggeration to say that people here in Stepney and in Wapping and Canning Town are dying of starvation. Parents are so weakened by hunger that if work was offered them they could not do it."

Asked to specify cases, Father Ring pointed to the case of a family of nine, where he said that all they had to exist upon was the wage of six shillings which the eldest girl earned at office cleaning. "But there are still more terrible cases," continued Father Ring. "Only the other day a docker's wife gave birth to a child, and there was not a rag in the home to wrap the infant in.

"In another case a baby was brought to the church to be christened clothed in brown paper. So racked with hunger are some of the people that they spend their time in bed. They tell you there is nothing to get up for. One man who was visited was found dressed in a sack."

Knee talks about the Saxons laughing at the Norman castles, thinking by ignoring them they could regain their land. It seems to me his illustration would be still more apt if applied to the Parliamentary Socialists who ignore the Norman capitalist castles of to-day, and seem to think that the vote is a Gabriel trumpet that has only to sound to lay Capitalism flat.

Knee asks how it is that when, "by some queer streak of luck the worker becomes a capitalist he takes to the political air like a lark." Perfectly simple. As I have said before, political power is the reflex of economic power. It is his money that votes. Knee says that power comes from politics, whereas I say it comes from economics, and this is the rock upon which we split.

Knee is very wobbly about the power of the strike. As shown, he admits that the strike is the final weapon of desperation if the capitalists refuse the fruits of political victory, and yet he says, "so long as the capitalist State remains, so long will it be able to throttle any strike, however big."

It seems to me that this is a most pessimistic position. First to declare that if voting won't work then we must rely on the strike, and then to follow this up by admitting that the State can throttle any strike. I would ask, then, how Knee ever expects to get anything except by the grace of God and the capitalists? He gives up the vote, the citizen army, and finally the strike, and as far as I can see his one method remaining is that miracle that he has been patiently waiting twenty years for.

Quite true, as he says, hitherto the strike has been simply a weapon of defence, but that is because the trade unions have been merely after ameliorative measures in their own particular trades. They have not been class-conscious, revolutionary, industrial unions, and naturally their strikes have not been aggressive nor revolutionary.

Here the Syndicalist is prophetic. He insists that the strikes of the future will become more and more revolutionary as the workers organise by class instead of by trade.

That, instead of the unions as in the past being merely agents for reform, they will in the future be the means to the Social Revolution.

Knee cries, "Let us oust the capitalist class." As a matter of fact what he means by "oust" is merely to

bend the Knee and politely pass a vote requesting them to oust themselves.

Then, if they do not "oust," Knee proposes coming to the Syndicalists and asking them to do the "ousting" for him; he to take the glory for originating the idea.

The Syndicalists need no suggestion from the Parliamentarians as to what they ought to do when they have achieved solidarity. One thing is certain, they will not waste time waiting five years for a Parliamentary election before they dare make their wants known.

Collision of Irreconcilables

THE recognition of the one-sidedness of all bargains between laborer and capitalist is slowly making way not only with the general public, but where we would least expect it—in the courts.

Some months ago the management of the Great Northern Railroad, upon learning that the carmen in its employ had been successful in forming strong local organizations at its division points, issued a notice to the effect that as a condition precedent to retaining their positions the members of the new organizations must renounce their affiliation with the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen. This act was in direct violation of the State law, and the railroad company was proceeded against. The Supreme Court of the State has just handed down its decision—a victory for the union. In part the decision says: "Theoretically the employer and employee are on an equality, so that one is free to employ and the other to accept employment as he sees fit, but in practice it is to the employee very often a matter of compulsion and not of free choice. As a rule his daily wage is needed for the daily wants of himself and family, and nothing is left for the morrow. To sustain life he must needs obtain or retain employment on whatever terms it may be offered. Under such conditions his necessities may be easily made use of as a means of coercion. If an employer, who knows that his employee is in a position where he must retain the employment or starve, should then with threat of dismissal from service coerce him to leave an organization wherein the employee found help and support, and which was in no way inimical to the interests of the employer, we would all unhesitatingly condemn the conduct of the employer as a moral wrong. We fail to see wherein coercion under similar circumstances may not also be a legal wrong and a violation of section 5,079 R.L., 1905."

Of course, it is now but a logical step from the recognition of the unjustness of allowing an employer to dictate as to membership in a labor union to the recognition that any dictation by the employer as to wages or hours is equally unjust, inasmuch as the workers have no real power to bargain except by means of a labor union so powerful that a general strike has a possibility of success.

But then see where we land. The court says that the individual worker is powerless. Under the court's protection he forms a union and inaugurates a strike which may endanger the public food supply. Then in steps the court and declares that such a strike is a public menace; that it practically amounts to a civil war; that it must cease.

But, say the workers, you have just decreed that the strike is our only weapon of defence, and now when we use it you declare we are insurgents. What, then, are we to do? You put the strike weapon in our hands, and then when we use it you say that we are insurrectionists.

All this illustrates one of the many impossibilities of the present system. We are damned if we don't, and damned if we do.

Barnes: Puritanism vs. Votes

RATHER an amusing complication besets the Socialist Party of America at the opening of its campaign with Debs as its standard-bearer. It is all about the morals of one Mahlon Barnes, elected by the Convention as campaign manager.

Barnes is an excellent man for manager. He has not only proven this in the past few weeks since his election, but he had a long and good record as secretary of the Socialist Party. However, Barnes is not only a man who enjoys work, but he also enjoys society, particularly of the opposite sex; and, what is more, does so without much regard to the Seventh Commandment. Awful! At least, all this was said about him some time ago while he was secretary of the Party; and, while the sayers were largely an unclean gang of hypocrites and liars, nevertheless, they raised enough hullabaloo a year or so ago to cause the retirement of Barnes.

The Convention at Chicago knew all about this, and ignored it, for when Hillquit nominated Barnes for campaign manager he was elected without protest unanimously. I heard a well-known American Socialist say that it was the one brave act the Convention permitted itself. I agreed. But it was not war, not politics, not a good vote-getting action. No sooner did the knowledge of the election of Barnes get back to the "purity-mongers" than a fearful squeal rent the air. Members wrote that they would rather vote for Taft than vote for Debs with Barnes as manager. What's more to the point, they said they would refuse to contribute to the campaign fund. Rather than have the Social Revolution handed to them through the instrumentality of Don Juan Barnes they would prefer enduring capitalism for ever. Hot stuff, these modern-day American Puritan Socialists. They go Christianity several better; they would condemn all the world to eternal damnation in order not to save one man, but to damn him also.

Poor Hillquit, as the proposer of Barnes, was made the scapegoat. Funny position for such an astute politician to find himself in. The record of the Convention was raked up to prove that Hillquit had alleged in nominating Barnes that the National Committee had endorsed Barnes. Hillquit replies that the record is inaccurate, and I think he is quite correct. And anyway, why should the baby act be played? The Convention knew quite as much about Barnes and his record as Hillquit. Even if the National Committee had endorsed him, that was no reason for the Convention to follow suit. The whole amount of the matter is that the Convention thought Barnes the best man for the place, but it did not count upon the power of the fanatical Puritan Party raising such an awful stench.

The question of Barnes was put up to Debs. It was a delicate question for him to handle. He did not handle it. He refers it to the Party.

Debs said that the Barnes question was attracting more attention within the Party than was the question of Socialism, and that it was surely going to lose votes. Whether it was a good or bad thing to lose

votes on a principle when "this is our year" Debs did not say, but he thoroughly concurred in having a referendum of the Party taken to see if the membership as a whole really did wish Barnes or votes. As a matter of fact, I doubt if Debs would have lost a dozen votes by retaining Barnes were it not for the internal rumpus the Puritans would insist on kicking up and diverting attention to such a miserable side issue. But we have to take things as they are, and if we wish to get votes we must kowtow to everybody, and therefore I have but little doubt but that the Socialist Party of America will once again purify itself and cry "Barnes must go."

This does not mean that the American Socialists are as a body Puritans; it merely means they want votes. Just as when Gorky was my guest at an hotel in New York, and the New York "World" came out with the story that the woman with him was an actress and not his legal wife, and the hotel-keeper insisted upon Gorky's vacating, it was not because the hotel man was a Puritan himself, far from it, but because he was afraid he would lose custom if he kept Gorky under his roof after all the publicity.

The Socialists are after votes, and the hotel man was after dollars, and both pursue the logical path.

The "New Age" and that Spark-Plug

IN my comments last number upon the Original and Only Way to Social Salvation, as propounded by the inventor, Mr. Orage, of the "New Age," I incidentally dropped a modest line to the effect that "I had always thought that wages were the first charge upon production," as opposed to the Orageian theory that "wages are not fixed by the needs of the worker, but by the interplay of Capital and Labor." I said, "I would not press the point." I did not wish to divert the "New Age" from an explanation of "co-management with the State."

However, as usually happens when your opponent has a poor case, he dilates on the minor issue and neglects the major one. My single line of doubt called forth a page and a-half in the "New Age" about "the defect in Mr. Wilshire's sparking-plug." I might call attention, by the way, that this use of sparking-plug was original with me, and that the "New Age" makes a direct steal. But it is quite welcome to my contribution to the English language.

I will only say that if I expect my horse to plough the field, I must give him his oats; the horse must have food, whether the ploughing result in a product sufficient to pay rent or profit or not. It is in this sense I would say that the wages of the horse, his oats, are the first charge on production. What applies to the horse equally applies to the wages for the hired man who drives the horse. Perhaps my use of English is faulty in calling wages the "first charge on production," but certainly no one can say that the horse must not have his oats, no matter what becomes of interest and rent charges.

It seems to me that the following letter in the "New Age" on that interesting subject is such a fine example of the solemnity with which an Englishman views Americana that it is worth reproduction:—

Sir,—In a discussion of "the Guild-Socialism of 'The New Age,'" Mr. Gaylord Wilshire, in the magazine of his own name for August, contributes some pertinent as well as impertinent remarks concerning both yourself personally and "The New Age." His comments, I am sure, on yourself will have no interest for you, though I may say that they are so far from being abusive as to aim at being jocularly friendly. When I assure you that their humour is American, you will gather that abuse would be preferable. The comments on "The New Age," however, are of slightly more interest. Your proposal in particular for co-management between the State and the unions strikes this Syndicalist acolyte as impracticable—not, as one might expect, because the unions will never be equal to it, but on the absurd ground that Labour will one day be so strong as to refuse to admit the State to equality with itself. "Labour," he says, "could not, with dignity to itself, consent to share its right to manage with the 'State,' inasmuch as the 'State' would then be its own creature." We have got a long way to go before this dignity is in sight. And, meanwhile, the Syndicalist neophyte might open a dictionary to discover what the State is.

PRESS CUTTER.

The letter is especially noteworthy, because the fact of its publication indicates that the "New Age" itself feels rather drawn to its sympathetic defender. However, as Mr. Orage kindly relieves the intensity of the situation by hurling the spark-plug back to its source, I imagine he will not cut me dead when next we may pass by. He must know that I was merely varying the phrase "eccentricity of genius." If I was guilty of "impertinent personal remarks," as would seem to be possibly the decision of Mr. Orage, judging from his publication of his correspondent's letter, then again I must plead ignorance of the meaning of words. If I am guilty, then anyone who comments upon the work of any author, modern or ancient, and finds within the context logic which is an indication that the writer thereof has a mind which is not always keyed to the same pitch, may be also guilty of personal impertinence.

But the anonymous correspondent at any rate can be credited with calling attention to the fact that Mr. Orage failed to take up my point that it is as absurd to talk about Labor co-operating with the State as it is to talk about a peasant co-operating with his hoe. The State is a tool made and controlled by the capitalists. In the future of Socialism it will, if it exists, be a tool controlled by Labor. In the interim the State is bound to be entirely under the control of the capitalists until by a revolutionary change it finally falls into the control of Labor.

There can be no dual control. Labor, with its Labor and Socialist political parties, can delude itself that it is sharing control of the State with the capitalists, just as a child may think it is driving the horse when it is allowed to grasp with its small hands the reins held fast by an indulgent driver. The child may not awaken to the innocent deception practised upon it until a turning in the road occurs and it finds that the puny strength of its arms is of no avail to guide the horse in a different direction from that determined upon by the stronger arms of the driver.

Labor may be allowed to lay its hands on the reins of State, but we may be sure that the hands it lays will never be effective to do much co-operating as long as the infinitely stronger hand of the capitalists holds the reins. We may "have a long way to go" before Labor assumes control; if so, we then must go the "long way." Co-operation with the State belongs to the realm of Grimm's Fairy Tales.

Printed for the Proprietors by the Twentieth Century Press Limited (Trade Union and 48 Hours), 37a, Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C.